



Department of Justice

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CALIFORNIA PROSECUTORS GARNER NATIONAL MARIJUANA AWARDS

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced that the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) recognized the work of three Eastern District of California prosecutors on Thursday, December 4, 2008 in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building on the White House grounds. ONDCP Director John Walters, Deputy Director Scott Burns, and Acting Deputy Director Dave Murtaugh presented the awards.

At the National Marijuana Eradication Initiative Conference, Assistant United States Attorney Kathy Servatius received an individual award for her work in prosecuting *U.S. v. Scarmazzo et al.* who were convicted by a jury of operating a continuing criminal enterprise (a lucrative marijuana dispensary in Modesto). They were sentenced to more than 20 years in a federal penitentiary.

Assistant United States Attorney Laurel Montoya was part of a team that received recognition for its investigation and prosecution efforts arising from the *Santamaria* case. Part of Operation LOCCUST, *Santamaria* involved persons cultivating marijuana on public lands as well as trafficking crystal meth and cocaine. More than 12,885 plants were eradicated, 42.5 ounces of crystal meth, and nine ounces of cocaine were seized. Six defendants were indicted and the matter is currently pending.

Using information gained from an undercover officer, Assistant United States Attorney Michael Beckwith is prosecuting a 12-defendant case, *U.S. v. Ramirez et al.* The defendants in this case used the money from sales of marijuana grown on public land to purchase methamphetamine. Firearms, methamphetamine, and marijuana were seized from two locations. And in another case being prosecuted by Beckwith, eight defendants were from Sacramento, Bakersfield and the Bay Area, involving over 326 pounds of marijuana arrested in *U.S. v. Garcia-Valdez et al.*

“This office has done great work on the issue of drug trafficking and reducing the availability of drugs in our communities. I am very proud of Kathy, Laurel, and Mike for the work they have done which has so deservedly brought this recognition on a national level. Their work is representative of the overall effort in this office to vigorously prosecute drug dealers. This is a great office and I am very proud to be the United States Attorney,” stated U.S. Attorney Scott.

Chief of California’s Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement John Gaines added, “The investigations conducted by CAMP and our Major Marijuana Investigation Teams, is an excellent example of how the use of narcotic task forces and inter-agency cooperation can be an effective tool in the dismantling of major drug trafficking organizations who use our public lands to grow marijuana. I am very proud of the award recipients who have been recognized for their hard work and sacrifice.”